

## DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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## ELEPHANTA CAVES

### Context

- A major excavation by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) on **Elephanta Island** has revealed a 1,500-year-old stepped reservoir.

### Key Features of the Stepped Reservoir

- The excavated structure is a **T-shaped stepped reservoir**, indicating a planned architectural design.
- The reservoir measures about **14.7 metres in length**, with widths varying between **6.7 metres and 10.8 metres**.
- The excavation has reached a **depth of five metres**, exposing **20 well-aligned steps** made of stone blocks.



### Elephanta Caves

- The Elephanta Caves, located on Elephanta Island (historically known as Gharapuri, meaning “city of caves”), are a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** situated in Mumbai Harbour.
- The name “**Elephanta**” was given by the **Portuguese in the 16th century** after they discovered a large stone elephant near the island, while the **original name Gharapuri** was used by local inhabitants.
- Historically, the island was associated with multiple dynasties.
  - ♦ The **Kalachuris of Mahishmati** are considered the main patrons of the caves during the 6th century CE, as supported by recent coin discoveries of **King Krishnaraja**. Before them, the Konkan Mauryas ruled the region, followed by the **Chalukyas and Rashtrakutas** who maintained its importance.
- There are seven caves, of which Cave 1 (Great Cave) is the most prominent. It houses the iconic 20-foot **Trimurti sculpture**.
  - ♦ A three-headed figure representing Shiva as Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer.



- The caves are carved out of **basalt rock of the Deccan Trap formation**.

Source: TH

## INDIA–TÜRKIYE TALKS SIGNAL DIPLOMATIC RESET

### Context

- India and Türkiye held the **12th round of Foreign Office Consultations (FoC)** after a gap of four years, indicating efforts to revive strained bilateral relations.

### Background

- **Türkiye**, under President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, repeatedly **raised the Kashmir issue at international forums**.
  - ♦ Relations worsened during Operation Sindoor, where **Türkiye supported Pakistan** militarily and diplomatically.
- **India responded** by excluding Türkiye from diplomatic briefings and witnessing public calls to **boycott Turkish tourism and trade**.
- **Consequences:** Indian tourist arrivals to Türkiye declined by **37%** in June 2025 compared to the previous year.
  - ♦ Bilateral trade between India and Türkiye decreased to **\$8.71 billion**, reflecting a significant contraction in economic engagement.

### Global Dynamics Shaping Relations

- Türkiye has been actively **involved in regional diplomatic initiatives**, including consultations with countries such as **Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan**.
- India has also recently **engaged with Azerbaijan** despite earlier tensions over its support to Pakistan.
- India's outreach to countries like **China and Malaysia** indicates a broader recalibration of its foreign policy approach.
- These developments reflect India's willingness to engage pragmatically with countries despite past disagreements.

### Significance of Türkiye for India

- Türkiye occupies a **strategic location at the crossroads of Europe and Asia**, which makes it important for India's connectivity and geopolitical outreach.
- Türkiye holds significance in multilateral forums such as the **United Nations and the G20**, where cooperation can support India's global interests.
- Türkiye's role in the Islamic world makes it relevant for India in managing its diplomatic engagement with Muslim-majority countries.

### Brief on India-Türkiye Relations

- **Economic Relations:** The Bilateral Trade Agreement between India and Turkey was signed in **1973**.
  - ♦ It was followed by an Agreement on setting up an **India-Turkey Joint Commission on Economic and Technical Cooperation (JCETC) in 1983**.
  - ♦ Bilateral trade has shown significant growth, crossing **USD 10 billion in 2021-22** and reaching approximately **USD 13.88 billion in 2022-23**.
- **Institutional Framework of Bilateral Engagement:** India and Türkiye institutionalized Foreign Office Consultations in **2000** to ensure regular diplomatic dialogue.
  - ♦ The **Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism provides** a platform for security cooperation, with its last meeting held in **2019**.
  - ♦ The **India-Türkiye Policy Planning Dialogue**, launched in **2020**, strengthens strategic coordination between the two countries.
- **Humanitarian Assistance:** India launched **Operation Dost** in 2023 to assist Türkiye after devastating earthquakes.
- **The Indian diaspora** in Türkiye is estimated to be around **3,000 individuals**.

### Challenges in Bilateral Relations

- Differences over the Kashmir issue continue to remain a major source of friction.
- Türkiye's close **strategic relationship with Pakistan** poses challenges to trust-building.
- Past **military and diplomatic support to Pakistan** has created a perception gap in India.
- Domestic political narratives and leadership statements continue to influence bilateral ties.

### Concluding remarks

- India-Türkiye engagement reflects a **pragmatic shift in diplomacy**, where managing differences takes precedence over confrontation.

- In a fragmented global order, such engagements help **maintain strategic autonomy and stability** in international relations.

Source: TH

## WORLD INEQUALITY LAB RELEASED REPORT ON LAND INEQUALITY IN INDIA

### Context

- A working paper by the World Inequality Lab highlights the **extent and nature of land inequality** in rural India.
  - ♦ The study is based on data from the Socio-Economic Caste Census covering **650 million** people across **2.7 lakh villages**.

### Key Findings of the Study

- **High Concentration of Land Ownership:** The top **10%** of rural households own **44%** of total land, indicating a high concentration of land ownership.
  - ♦ The top **5%** of households own **32%** of land, while the top **1%** alone own **18%** of land, reflecting extreme inequality at the top.
- **Widespread Landlessness:** About **46%** of rural households are **landless**, which shows that nearly half of rural India has no access to land as a productive asset.
- **Village-Level Concentration:** The largest landholder in a village owns, on average, about **12.4%** of the total village land.
  - ♦ In approximately **3.8% of villages**, a single landowner controls more than **50%** of the land, indicating the persistence of landlord dominance.
- **State-wise Variation:** Bihar and Punjab show high levels of land concentration, with many villages dominated by large landowners.
  - ♦ **Kerala has the highest land inequality** in terms of **Gini coefficient**, indicating a highly unequal distribution.
  - ♦ **Punjab** records the **highest landlessness at 73%**, followed by Bihar (59%) and Madhya Pradesh (51%), whereas Rajasthan (34%) and Uttar Pradesh (39%) have relatively lower levels.

### Determinants of Land Inequality in India

- **Historical Factors:** Regions under the **zamindari system** show higher inequality, with dominance of large landlords and fewer small farmers.
  - ♦ **Former princely states** show relatively lower inequality, mainly due to a lower proportion of landless households.

- **Agricultural Factors:** Regions with better agricultural suitability tend to have higher land concentration, as fertile land attracts accumulation by large landowners.
- **Fragmentation of landholdings** among small farmers due to inheritance laws reduced viability, forcing distress sales and consolidation by larger landowners.
- **Ineffective implementation of land reforms** allowed loopholes such as benami transactions and land fragmentation on paper, enabling large landholders to retain control.

#### Legal Framework for Land Reforms in India

- **Abolition of intermediaries (Zamindari Abolition Acts)** aimed to eliminate middlemen and transfer ownership rights to actual cultivators.
- **Tenancy reforms** sought to regulate rent, provide security of tenure, and confer ownership rights to tenants.
  - ♦ **Example:** Operation Barga in West Bengal.
- **The Land ceiling Act** imposed **limits on the maximum land** that an individual or family could own, with surplus land intended for redistribution among the landless.
- **Consolidation of landholdings** aimed to reduce fragmentation and improve agricultural efficiency, especially in states like Punjab and Haryana.
- **Digitisation of land records** through initiatives such as the **Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP)** aims to improve transparency and reduce disputes.
- **Forest Rights Act, 2006** recognized land rights of forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers, addressing historical injustices.

#### Challenges in Land Reforms

- **Resistance** from powerful landed elites hindered effective reform implementation, especially in states with strong landlord influence.
- **Lack of updated and clear land records** led to disputes, litigation, and exclusion of rightful beneficiaries.
- **Tenancy reforms** remained incomplete, with many tenants lacking formal recognition and security of tenure.
- **Social barriers, including caste-based discrimination**, continued to restrict access to land for marginalized communities.
- **Land is a State subject** under the Constitution, so states play a primary role in implementing land reforms.

#### Way Ahead

- Special measures should be taken to improve land access for **marginalized communities**, including **joint land titles and targeted redistribution programmes**.
- **Promotion of land leasing frameworks** and **contract farming** should be encouraged, as recommended by NITI Aayog, to improve efficiency without disturbing ownership rights.
- **Support for small and marginal farmers** should be enhanced through access to institutional credit, irrigation, technology, and Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) to reduce distress land sales.

#### Concluding Remarks

- Land inequality in India is deeply **rooted in historical, social, and institutional factors**.
- The major challenge is not only unequal distribution but also the **high level of landlessness among rural households**.
- Addressing land inequality **requires comprehensive reforms**, inclusive policies, and support for landless and small farmers to ensure equitable rural development.

Source: IE

## STATES TOLD TO CLEAR FORENSIC BACKLOGS BY THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

#### Context

- The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has **issued directives to chief secretaries** of all states and Union Territories, directing them to strengthen **forensic science laboratories (FSLs)**, fill vacancies, and clear backlogs **within three months**.

#### Directives

- The MHA has asked all the states to coordinate through the **Directorate of Forensic Science Services (DFSS)**.
- **States must institute monitoring** to ensure timely forensic reports and launch a special drive to eliminate all backlogs by July.
- Expand regional and district-level FSLs, deploy advanced equipment for physical, biological, chemical, and digital evidence, and ensure regular use of Mobile Forensic Vans for on-site collection.
- **Dedicated forensic evidence collection teams** should be formed at district and sub-divisional levels.

- Police personnel are to receive structured training on evidence protocols, with strict adherence to DFSS SOPs and mandatory accreditation for all FSLs under national and international standards.
- **Innovation** is encouraged through collaborations with IITs, NITs, and universities, including hackathons hosted by state labs.

### Forensic Science

- Forensic science is a set of **scientific methods and expertise** used to investigate crimes or examine evidence that might be presented in a court of law.
- **Forensic science comprises** a diverse array of disciplines, from fingerprint and DNA analysis to the analysis of synthetic opioids and digital evidence.
- Forensic science plays a **crucial role in the criminal justice system**.
  - ♦ It helps investigators collect, rapidly analyze, and interpret complex evidence to solve crimes.
- Strengthening forensic capabilities is critical for improving investigation quality, timely justice, and conviction rates.

### Institutional Framework in India

- **Directorate of Forensic Science Services (DFSS):** Under the Ministry of Home Affairs; coordinates forensic labs across India.
- **Central Forensic Science Laboratories (CFSLs):** There are **7 CFSLs** in the country located in Chandigarh, Delhi, Assam, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Telangana.
- **National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU):** A premier institution for forensic education and research.
- **State Forensic Science Laboratories (FSLs):** Operate under respective state governments.

### Challenges

- **Inadequate Infrastructure:** Limited and poorly equipped forensic labs and uneven availability across states.
- **Shortage of Skilled Experts:** Lack of trained forensic professionals despite institutions like National Forensic Sciences University.
- **Delay in Forensic Reports:** Huge backlog leads to delayed trials and weakens justice delivery.
- **Poor Crime Scene Management:** Improper evidence collection and contamination due to lack of police training.

- **Limited Use in Investigation:** Continued reliance on confessions instead of scientific evidence, despite reforms under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

### Government Initiatives

- **Infrastructure Development:** An approval has been provided for setting up of **08 new CFSLs** in the country in Jammu, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, and Kerala.
- **A central application e-Forensics** has been developed to facilitate digital repository of forensic data ensuring end to end data security and data integrity.
- **Data Centre:** The government has approved establishment of the **National Forensic Data Centre** under the umbrella scheme “**Safety of Women**” to systematically stockpile the forensic data received from all forensic labs for an efficient evidence management system.
- **The National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU)** has been set up under the Act of the Parliament in **2020** for providing quality and trained forensic manpower across all parts of the country.
- **Under the Scheme for Modernization of Forensic Capacities**, 420 crore have been approved for Upgradation of Forensic Science Laboratories in States / Union Territories” and ₹496.66 crore have been approved for providing Mobile Forensic Vans for all districts and State FSLs.

### Malimath Committee

- The Malimath Committee was formed in **2000** by the Government, aimed to reform the criminal justice system.
  - ♦ It reviewed the investigation, trial procedures, and sentencing guidelines.
- **Recommendations on Forensic Science:**
  - ♦ Emphasized the integration of forensic science into the criminal justice system to improve investigation quality and conviction rates.
  - ♦ It recommended a shift from confession-based to evidence-based investigation.
  - ♦ Expand and modernize Forensic Science Laboratories (FSLs) across states.
  - ♦ Develop uniform national standards for forensic practices.
- These recommendations are reflected in reforms like Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, which mandates forensic investigation for serious offences.

### Way Forward

- There is a need to strengthen institutions like National Forensic Sciences University.
- The government shall increase investment in labs and technology.
- There is a need to develop uniform national standards.
- Regular capacity building and training for police and judiciary is necessary to strengthen the Criminal Justice System.

Source: IE

## ROOFTOP SOLAR: GOVT. PLANNING INCENTIVE SCHEME FOR STATES

### Context

- To meet its target of **one crore PM Surya Ghar households by 2027**, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) is encouraging States to adopt a **'utility led aggregation (ULA)' model**.

### About

- The MNRE is mooted an **incentive scheme** to make PM Surya more attractive to States.
- **The State electricity distribution companies (DISCOMS)** will pay for installing rooftop solar systems in households that either can't afford them or don't have adequate infrastructure to install rooftop systems.
- The MNRE has already sanctioned **12.58 lakh (ULA) installations** in Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Kerala, Jammu and Kashmir, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Ladakh, Daman and Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Telangana, Bihar and Tripura.

### India's Energy Share

- **As of 2025**, the country's total installed electricity capacity has crossed **500 GW**, reaching **509.6 GW**.
- **The total non-fossil power installed capacity** has reached 262.74 GW in 2025 which is 51.5% of the total installed electricity capacity in the country.
- The solar energy installed capacity has reached **132.85 GW in 2025**.
- **Fossil-fuel-based sources:** 244.80 GW, about **49 % of the total**, making coal a source of up to almost half the energy needs. Also, coal contributes about **74% of total electricity production in India**.
- Globally, India stands **3rd in Solar Power** installed capacity, **4th in Wind Power** capacity and **4th in total Renewable Energy** capacity.

### PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana

- It was launched in **2024** and aims to provide free electricity to households by facilitating the installation of rooftop solar panels.
- **Aim:** To achieve rooftop solar (RTS) installations in one crore households in the residential sector by FY 2026-27.
- The scheme offers a **subsidy of up to 40%** to households, making renewable energy more affordable and accessible.
- **Eligibility:**

The household must be an Indian citizen.

The household must own a house with a roof that is suitable for installing solar panels.

The household must have a valid electricity connection.

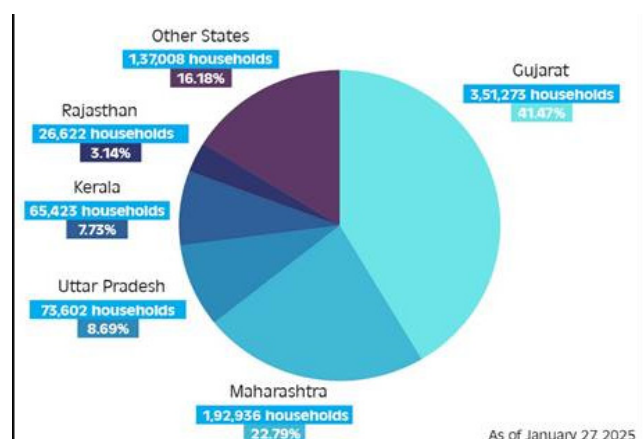
The household must not have availed any other subsidy for solar panels.

### Model Solar Village:

- An allocation of ₹800 crore has been designated for this component, with ₹1 crore provided to each selected Model Solar Village.
- To qualify as a candidate village, it must be a revenue village with a population of over 5,000 (or 2,000 in special category states).
- This initiative aims to promote solar energy adoption and empower village communities to achieve energy self-reliance.

| Average Monthly Electricity Consumption (units) | Suitable Rooftop Solar Plant Capacity | Subsidy Support          |
|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 0-150   | 1-2 kW                                | ₹ 30,000/- to ₹ 60,000/- |
| 150-300   | 2-3 kW                                | ₹ 60,000/- to ₹ 78,000/- |
| > 300   | Above 3 kW                            | ₹ 78,000/-               |

### Top 5 states with the highest number of households benefiting under the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana



**Key Benefits of Scheme**

- **Provides free electricity to households** through subsidized rooftop solar panel installations, significantly reducing energy costs.
- **Expected to save the government around ₹75,000 crore annually** in electricity expenses.
- **Contributes to increasing renewable energy** use and reducing carbon emissions by about 720 million tonnes.
- Adds 30 GW solar capacity via **rooftop installations in the residential sector**.
- **Enables households to earn income** by selling surplus generated power to DISCOMs.
- Creates an estimated **17 lakh direct jobs in various sectors**.

**Way Forward**

- The PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana is well on track to achieve its ambitious goal of 1 crore solar-powered homes.
- Beyond reducing electricity costs, the scheme is fostering energy self-reliance, environmental sustainability, and economic growth, making it a key pillar in India's clean energy transition.

Source: TH

**NEWS IN SHORT****SOIL SAKHIS****Context**

- The "Soil Sakhis" initiative in drought-prone districts of western Maharashtra is empowering women while improving soil health and agricultural productivity.

**About the Initiative**

- Launched in **2023** under the **Mann Deshi Foundation's Agriculture and Climate Action Programme**.
- Trains rural women as "**Soil Sakhis**" to promote **soil testing and scientific farming practices**.
- Implemented in **Satara, Sangli, Solapur, Kolhapur, and Pune** districts.

**Key Features**

- Soil Sakhis collect samples and facilitate **soil testing through laboratories**.
- Farmers receive **actionable reports** for improved crop and nutrient management.
- Soil Sakhis earn about **₹8,000–₹10,000 per month** (excluding petrol allowance).

Source: TH

**FSSAI CANNOT REGULATE ANIMAL FEED****Context**

- The Delhi High Court struck down a Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) regulation that **prohibited the sale of animal feed** containing meat or bone meal of bovine or porcine origin for **milk-producing animals**.

**About**

- FSSAI banned the use of meat or bone meal in feed meant for milk- and meat-producing animals, **except poultry, pigs and fish**.
- The Delhi High Court held that FSSAI is **not empowered** to prescribe standards for **food meant for animal consumption** and its mandate is **limited to food for humans**.

**Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)**

- It has been established under the **Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006**.
- **Administrative Authority:** Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.
- It has been created for laying down **science based standards** for articles of food and to regulate their **manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import** to ensure availability of **safe and wholesome food for human consumption**.
- **Headquarters:** Delhi
- **FSSAI and the State Food Safety Authorities** enforce the various provisions of the Act.

Source: TH

**CABINET CLEARS 12% HIKE IN P&K FERTILISER SUBSIDY****In News**

- The Union Cabinet has approved a 12% increase in Nutrient-Based Subsidy (NBS) rates for Phosphatic and Potassic (P&K) fertilizers for the Kharif Season 2026.

**About Nutrient-Based Subsidy (NBS) Scheme**

- **Launch:** Introduced in 2010 by the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers.
- **Objectives:** Encourage balanced fertilizer application across nutrients.
  - ♦ Rationalise and contain the government's subsidy burden.
  - ♦ Promote efficient nutrient management in agriculture.
- **Key Features:** Subsidy is nutrient-centric, i.e., calculated based on the content of:

- ◆ Nitrogen (N)
- ◆ Phosphorus (P)
- ◆ Potassium (K)
- ◆ Sulphur (S)
- **Covers 28 notified grades of P&K fertilisers**, including commonly used products such as DAP and SSP (Urea is not under NBS and remains under a separate subsidy regime).

Source: TH

## 11 YEARS OF PRADHAN MANTRI MUDRA YOJANA (PMMY)

### Context

- **The Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY)** has completed 11 years.

### About

- **Launched:** In 2015.
- **Aim:** To support small-scale business ventures for non-corporate and non-farm income-generating activities.
- **Target Group:** New entrepreneurs, small shopkeepers, women entrepreneurs, street vendors, artisans, fruit/vegetable vendors, and small manufacturing units.
- These loans are given by **Commercial Banks, RRBs, Small Finance Banks, MFIs and NBFCs.**
- **Under the aegis of PMMY, MUDRA has created four products namely:**
  - ◆ **Shishu:** Covering loans upto Rs. 50,000/-.
  - ◆ **Kishor:** Covering loans above Rs. 50,000/- and up to Rs. 5 lakhs.
  - ◆ **Tarun:** Covering loans above Rs.5 lakh and upto Rs.10 lakhs.
  - ◆ **TarunPlus:** Covering loans above Rs.10lakh and upto Rs.20 lakhs.
- **Loans cover term financing and working capital needs** across manufacturing, trading and service sectors, **including activities allied to agriculture** like poultry, dairy, and beekeeping, etc.
- **The interest rate** is governed by RBI guidelines, with flexible repayment terms.

Source: PIB

## SKILLS OUTCOMES FUND

### In Context

- The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has launched a campaign to establish the **Skills Outcomes Fund.**

### About

- This initiative is designed to create better career opportunities for young people from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.
- It expands upon the achievements of the Skill Impact Bond, India's inaugural outcomes-based project started by the **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) in 2021.**
  - ◆ The Skill Impact Bond utilized private sector resources and knowledge, prioritizing actual job placement and long-term employment over simple training completion.
- The NSDC will also lead and manage this new fund.
- Financial support is directly tied to confirmed career results, specifically focusing on hiring and continued employment.

Source: PIB

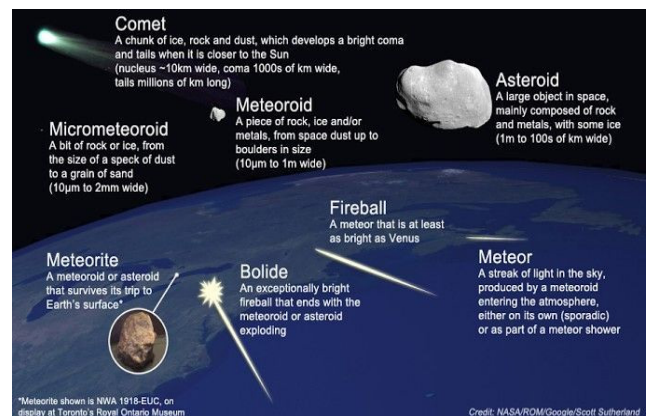
## METEORITES

### Context

- During the Artemis II mission, astronauts observed meteorite impacts on the Moon.

### What are Meteorites?

- A **meteorite** is a solid piece of debris from an object, such as a **comet, asteroid, or meteoroid**, that originates in outer space and survives its passage through the atmosphere to reach the surface of a planet or moon.



### Types of Meteorites:

- ◆ **Stony:** Composed mainly of silicate minerals
- ◆ **Iron:** Rich in iron and nickel
- ◆ **Stony-Iron:** Combination of metallic and rocky material

### About Artemis II Mission

- Artemis II mission is a crewed lunar flyby mission under **NASA's Artemis programme.**

- It was launched on April 1, 2026, marking the first human mission to the Moon's vicinity since Apollo 17 (1972).
  - ♦ The mission carries four astronauts aboard the **Orion spacecraft**.
- It is a 10-day mission, orbiting the Moon and returning to Earth without a lunar landing.

Source: TH

## DECLINE OF LAKES IN JAMMU & KASHMIR

### Context

- Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) finds nearly half of Jammu and Kashmir's lakes have vanished since 1967, warns of ecological crisis.

### Major Causes

- Unchecked human activities and encroachment;
- Weak institutional coordination;
- Absence of a unified regulatory framework, leading to land-use changes.

### Major Lakes of J&K, Ladakh UT

- **Dal Lake:** Famous freshwater lake known for houseboats, shikaras, and floating gardens (Raad).
- **Wular Lake:** Wular Lake is the largest freshwater lake in India and has been formed due to tectonic activity. It is fed by the Jhelum River and is recognized as a Ramsar site.

- **Pangong Tso:** It is a high-altitude brackish water lake extending into Tibet, known for its changing colors and strategic importance.
- **Tso Moriri:** It is another high-altitude brackish lake and a Ramsar site.
- **Manasbal Lake:** It is considered one of the deepest freshwater lakes in the region and the Mughal garden Jaroka Bagh, built by Nur Jahan, overlooks the lake.
- **Hokersar Wetland:** Often referred to as the "Queen of Wetlands".
- **Surinsar Lake and Mansar Lake:** They are twin lakes and are Ramsar sites.

Source: DTE

## EXERCISE CYCLONE-IV

### In Context

- The Indian Army is participating in the 4th edition of Exercise Cyclone-IV in Egypt.

### About

- Started in **2023**, it is a bilateral India-Egypt joint Special Forces military exercise.
- It will provide an opportunity for mutual exchange of professional expertise, strengthen camaraderie, and deepen understanding of each other's military traditions and cultures.

Source: TH

